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ASLEF

Journal



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the ASLEF Journal

NEWS ■■■■■■



ASLEF calls on Chancellor to guarantee Crossrail funding **4** European Court rules for ASLEF to choose its members **5** Adrian Mole author joins RUL for a quick read! **6** Positive moves from operators on 66s **7** ASLEF squashes into London Bridge! **8**

FEATURES ■■■■■■



9 People are fed up with overcrowding - Sardine man takes up the cause
10 Help Labour keep Scotland on the move - Jack McConnell
11 200 years after abolition, slavery is still an issue
12 A black day at Grayrigg
15 Drivers: the unrecognised victims of rail accidents
16 Brief looks at your rights
19 Key worker: A man of rails and Wales

REGULARS ■■■■■■

15 Branch news
17 Keeping track
18 Obituaries
19 Letters to the editor
23 Prize Crossword

GOVERNMENT RAIL SUBSIDIES SIGNAL MORE FAILURES



Transport Secretary Douglas Alexander announced last month that the government is to provide extra funding to private rail firms to finance an additional 1,000 train carriages in a bid to combat overcrowding. Of course we all welcome any positive action to tackle overcrowding – but why should the government finance private companies? And is this the best way the money could be spent?

The train companies took a contract to run a service, but overcrowding shows they're not doing it in an acceptable way. Now the government has agreed to use public money to bail them out.

This is remarkable for three reasons.

Firstly, why should any private company be subsidised for failing to meet standards it agreed to meet in its franchise contracts? If a garage agrees to fix your car and they don't do it properly, you don't buy them a new ramp. You go to another garage.

Secondly, if the government can subsidise firms why can't it provide money to pay for union demands – like pensions? When we spoke to ministers about rail pensions they said they'd like to help, and they were very sorry – but they couldn't interfere with private companies – and certainly couldn't offer subsidies!

And thirdly, if the government is happy to subsidise private firms to run the rail network why doesn't it take it back into public hands and do the job properly?

I would also question whether the subsidy is being used in the right way. Longer trains is a short term solution. Last year rail passenger traffic grew by 10% and demand is expected to continue rising rapidly. An extra carriage here and there is playing with the problem. The solution is to run more trains. This means there is an overwhelming case for more investment in in-cab signalling which would ensure that there is stopping distance between any two trains on a track – thus allowing more, safer, rail traffic. This is a much better long-term strategy which would allow for growth : more carriages is simply plastering over the problem rather than looking at a solution.

Outside signalling is the last remnant of the Victorian railway. The alternative – using modern radio technology to transmit information from train to train – is safer, modern and available.

If the government wants to subsidise rail – this would be the best way for them to do it.



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ASLEF calls on Chancellor to guarantee Crossrail funding

THE general secretary has written to the Chancellor urging him to finalise the funding for Crossrail. Keith Norman points out that London's population is estimated to grow by 600,000 by 2015, with an estimated 175,000 extra jobs in financial and business services alone and says Crossrail is 'essential for the capital's growth – which affects the economy of the entire country'.

Further, he says, that as a union with environmental awareness, ASLEF fully supports alternatives to wasteful road traffic in jammed city streets. It is essential that Crossrail is built as soon as possible as it will offer a speedy, safe and clean way of helping passengers across London. 'While the projected renewal of the Underground will upgrade London's existing transport network, Crossrail is vital to sustain the capital's growth,' he said.



Keith argues that a speedy decision of funding is needed for a project that 'will provide 40% of the extra transport capacity required by the middle of the next decade, ease congestion, provide transport access for some of the most deprived areas of the UK, and link the City of London, Canary Wharf, the West End and Heathrow.'

He also reminds Gordon Brown that the boost to productivity will almost certainly

generate more than enough tax revenue to pay for the government's contribution to the project.

The union wants to see a government commitment that physical work on Crossrail begins as soon as the Crossrail Bill receives Royal Assent. To this end Keith wants to see provision in the next Budget for the project, especially as the GLA calculates that every day of delay can cost the UK economy £4 million.



Flying French

FRANCE's high speed train, the TGV, has set a remarkable speed record of 344.43 mph (554.3 km/h) on the trials for the eastern route. This emphatically beats both its own previous record and the 552 km/h reached by the experimental Japanese Maglev. On 5 April there will be an official attempt to increase this to around 570 km/h – which is over 354 mph.

The chief executive of the French railway company SNCF estimates that over £100 billion will be invested in high speed lines over the coming 15 years. He believes that high speed rail will be used increasingly, as oil reserves dwindle and road traffic congestion is estimated to waste over £60 billion across Europe.

Channel Tunnel freight in difficulty

PROBLEMS are arising from the ending of the Minimum Usage Charge last November. The MUC was agreed between British Rail and the French SNCF in 1987. The freight element of the MUC amounted to £52 million a year but since BR's international freight business was sold to EWS, the government has been paying the £26 due from the UK side.

Two regular streams of Chunnel freight traffic ceased last month because of the costs. Belgium-based Unilog has closed down while GTS trasporti has ceased sending intermodal trains from Bari and Piacenza to Daventry and Manchester.

MPs concern over transport for Olympics

THE House of Commons Transport Committee's report on the Olympics has expressed its concern that transport arrangements are not further advanced and that contingency plans are not being made in case of any failure of the transport system.

The report criticises Olympic planners for not making the most of river transport and of vagueness about park-and-ride plans which could encourage car use and work against environmental objectives.

Youngest driver – the search continues!

IN THE February Journal we suggested that David Norman was probably the youngest person to qualify as a train driver (21 years, one month). Last month Jason Pountney made a bid (20 years and six months).

And now Stuart Greer from Coventry has written to say, 'Jason and I started together as secondmen at Saltley in April 1988. I passed out for driving aged 20 years and 7 months – also making me underage, but on the Midland this was overlooked. However, I believe we weren't the youngest.'

At around the same time another Saltley secondman was passed aged barely 20! I wonder if he will come forward now? He and I are still members of the Saltley branch.'

So: will the real Youngest Driver please stand up!

Commute across the Channel

THE BBC's *Money Programme* says that a combination of cheap flights, faster train journeys, flexible working hours and the Internet is creating thousands of new long-distance commuters between the continent and Britain.



SEA YOU AT WORK: Commuting habits are set to change

So many Britons are now moving to countries like France and Spain that, according to the think tank Future Forum, there will be more than 1.5 million people working in the UK while living in another country within a decade.

£160 million for Piccadilly signals

TUBE LINES, the London Underground PPP contractor, has announced that it has awarded Thales a £160 million contract to resignal the Piccadilly line. The company says this will increase capacity by 20% when combined with a new train fleet.

European Court rules for ASLEF to choose its members

IN 2003 ASLEF was told it could not legally expel a member for being an active member of the BNP, although the decision to do so had been reached democratically and within the union's rules. Last month a European Court ruled that the union is right, the UK government is wrong – and the union was awarded 53,900 euros for costs and expenses.

UK courts ruled that the law prevented unions from expelling people because this 'contravened their human rights'!

ASLEF could not accept that this was right. General Secretary Keith Norman explains, 'It was

inconceivable to us that a union did not have the right to operate its own rule book. This meant that the legal system was in control of how our union operated - rather than the people who were members of ASLEF.

'Secondly, it seemed utter folly that a golf club, for example, could choose who to have as members – but a trade union could not! We felt it was clearly wrong.'

Now, almost four years on, the union's position was vindicated when the European Court of Human Rights upheld ASLEF's right to expel members it felt

worked against trade union principles. The court agreed this did not breach the European Convention on Human Rights.

ASLEF's belief that this was 'a significant decision not only for us but for the whole trade union movement' was echoed by TUC general secretary Brendan Barber. Brendan said it was an 'important and welcome judgment'. It was, he said, 'common sense' that unions 'should not be forced to accept into membership people opposed to the basic principles of trade unionism' and added that, 'Every union will welcome this clear decision that they can

now expel BNP members.'

When the union decided to challenge the UK decision in the European Courts, we asked other unions to help us with our legal costs. The fact that 18 unions - NUM, CYWU, PFA, UCATT, NATFHE, NAPO, USDAW, EIS, RMT, UNISON, PCS, NUMAST, Community, CWU, CSP, GMB, FBU and NUJ - put their hands in their pockets reflects how seriously they treated the issue.

'I offer my sincere thanks to all the unions involved,' Keith said. 'They made our decision to pursue the issue to the European courts that bit easier.'

EU chief says road trains are 'not acceptable'

THE chair of the Council of European Union Ministers dealing with transport, German Transport Minister Wolfgang Tiefensee, has confirmed that giant lorries like Australia's road trains would not be acceptable on Europe's roads.

Following trials in Germany and the Netherlands, Tiefensee said he was 'very sceptical' about Gigaliners and similar vehicles. He pointed to safety worries including collisions, bridge strength and bend radii – and stressed his concern for the effect they could have on rail traffic.

He said early estimates suggested that 10% of intermodal freight would switch entirely to road - with the likelihood that wagonload and even bulk traffic would be affected too.

Tiefensee said freight transport in general needs to be made more acceptable to the public, adding that there would be 'considerable negative reactions if roadtrains were to become part of the cityscape'.



Birmingham New Street branch secretary Angie Butler receiving support from National Organiser Andy Reed with District Organiser Mick Whelan (left) looking on

CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY IN BIRMINGHAM

ASLEF women members, supported by union officials, had a presence at Birmingham New Street station on 8 March to draw attention to International Women's Day (IWD).

The union is calling for future IWDs to be designated a Bank Holiday - and stressed the poor state pension provision women receive - only 10% receive a full state pension. 'For every £1 a man receives from a pension, a women receives only 32p,' says union equality advisor Sharon Allen.



Three heads are better than one: Sharon Allen (left) checks petition signatures with WCC members Collette Gibson and Gillian McVittie

Manslaughter rail boss has jail term cut

A RAIL boss jailed for the manslaughter of four track workers killed by a runaway trailer at Tebay has had his jail term slashed by Appeal Court judges.

Mark Connolly had his sentence cut from nine years to seven when he appeared at court in London last month - but three top judges dismissed his appeal against his convictions.

Mr. Connolly was jailed last March after he was convicted of four manslaughter charges and linked safety offences over the tragedy in February 2004.

The judge also upheld the manslaughter convictions of Connolly's accomplice, crane-operator Roy Kennett, 29, of Maidstone, Kent, who was jailed for two years.

Four men died – and others were gravely injured – when the 20-tonne trailer careered out of a siding four miles up the line near Tebay, barrelling down one of the steepest bits of track in the country.

The prosecution said Connolly – boss of MAC Machinery Services – deliberately disconnected the trailer's hydraulic brakes. Mr Justice Holland made a specific finding that he had disabled the brakes to maximise his profit.

Adrian Mole author joins RUL for a quick read!

AT THE start of last month Sue Townsend – creator of the Adrian Mole series – joined Rail Union Learners at Midland Mainline to promote World Book Day and to launch the eight new 'Quick Read' books for 2007.

Sue was welcomed by Chris Nutty (ASLEF's lead Union Learning Rep) Phil Mason (Director of HR at Midland Mainline) and Liz Smith who is the Director of unionlearn.

She said, 'When I left school at 15, I never dreamt that I would become an author, when I was going from one unskilled job to another.'

'One of the greatest joys I get from writing is knowing that readers are inspired, enjoy the book, or just have a good laugh. Reading can transport you into a different world, broaden your horizons and



Liz Smith, Chris Nutty & Mary Alys welcome author Sue Townsend to unionlearn

inspire you to do things you never thought about before. It's certainly transformed my life.'

Rail Union Learning is one of many partners working with Quick Reads to reach out to the millions of adults in the UK with reading difficulties and the one-third of the British population who never pick up a book. Quick Reads are specially written, many of them by best-selling authors and popular personalities, for both reluctant

readers and for avid readers wanting a short, fast-paced read.

The event took place at the Rail Union Learning Zone at the train crew depot at Derby.

unionlearn Director Liz Smith spoke about the importance of workplace learning and presented Chris Nutty with a 'Skills for Life Advocate Award' in recognition of his hard work on behalf of union learners. Rail learners were also presented with certificates for their achievements in Skills for Life qualifications. The event

outlined the success of the Rail Union Learning Programme within Midland Mainline and the difference union-led learning has made to the workforce.

Chris Nutty said, 'Rail Union Learning Reps are spreading the message that learning changes lives. Education is something that no one should miss out on.'

● For more information on Rail Union Learning or Quick Reads please contact Shirley McCrory, ASLEF Learning Officer on 07739473174 or shirleymccrory@rul.org.uk

Rail Learning Reps Conference – 16 April

The Rail Union Learning Programme will be holding its third conference for Rail Union Learning Representatives in London on Monday 16 April.

TUC Deputy General Secretary Frances O'Grady will speak about the importance of learning both for the unions and the employers and will stress the key role of Rail Union Learning Representatives. The event will be attended by senior officials of ASLEF, RMT and TSSA, as well as Union Learning Representatives from across the country.



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ASLEF's Chris picks up TUC award

ON THE 24 February ASLEF's Chris Nutty was awarded with the TUC Midlands Learning and Skills Award in recognition of his achievements as a Rail Union Learning Representative. The presentation took place at the Midland TUC Annual Meeting at Rugby.

Although Chris - a train driver at Midland Mainline based at Derby - hadn't been involved in any form of education for around 20 years, in 2005 he decided to become a Rail Union Learning Representative. Now, as a lead rep, he represents all rail union members, covering all grades in the industry.

Chris is a passionate advocate of learning. He has worked and negotiated with providers to set up courses in a variety of subjects from literacy and numeracy and German to digital photography. 'Then once the courses are set up, I stay involved to make sure they run smoothly, try to ensure that the learners enjoy their learning experience and sort out any problems,' he explains. He sees it as part of his brief to encourage female first-time activists to take up ULR positions.



ASLEF's Chris Nutty picks up the TUC award. Left to right: Kevin Moran (Unity Trust), Chris Nutty, Ann Nutty and ASLEF National Organiser Andy Reed

Chris leads negotiations with management concerning learning and skills and he's managed to negotiate time off for Skills for Life learners - and secure a learning room at the Derby train crew depot.

Andy Reed, who attended the event, says, 'ASLEF is very proud of Chris for his efforts, and we're all delighted that the TUC has recognised the successes of this hard working, friendly, committed and genuine person.'

Positive moves from operators on 66s



BOTH GB Railfreight and Freightliner have responded positively to the union's demands concerning 66 locos.

GB Railfreight has told the union it is actively exploring a number of initiatives to improve the Class 66 cab environment. Specifically the company has trialled 4 pneumatically cushioned and adjustable seats manufactured by Grammer in Germany - and installed 2 into locomotives. The company points out the notable features including lumbar support, back rest adjustment and soft/hard damping. They have also shared their findings with DRS and shared them with Freightliner.

Freightliner has said that subject to ASLEF confirmation that the trials have been satisfactory, it plans to change the seats to this enhanced design. GB Railfreight has already committed itself to roll out this modification across its Class 66 fleet.

In addition, on a trial basis it has installed a cab cooling device, directing cool air onto the drivers' upper torso. It is similar to that now used on the Victoria Line underground fleet. They are awaiting the result of the trial during the oncoming warmer weather this summer but say they are confident that it will import an effective cooling solution to the Class 66 cab. Freightliner will evaluate a fitment schedule across its fleet if the trial proves a success.

GB Railfreight currently provides bottled water and wet-wipes in the cab, has developed a cab cleaning module at Peterborough and also begun fitting side window blinds.

Full reports of progress made with all companies will be submitted to the executive this month and an update will be included in the next edition of the Journal.

PASSENGERS, NOT CUSTOMERS



GUARDIAN writer Hugh O'Shaughnessy pointed out (in Tribune) last month that privatised rail companies 'insist on calling us 'customers' - surely the most accurate name in this period of Blairite privatisation - and revert to calling us 'passengers' only when people are dead or injured'.

Come Hither on 4 May!

THIS is just a reminder that the next Hither Green Reunion will take place on Friday 4 May at Beacon Road Railway Club from 1900 hours. As things are not looking too good with our social club finances this could well be the last one - but I hope not. So make an effort just in case. I will have some of the 25th Anniversary Hither Green strike badges with me at the event, so if you want one - come along! See you there!

Ray Cooper Hither Green - RMS



Our place in the Sun

THE SUN - sometimes imprecisely described as a newspaper - needs treatment for a severe split personality.

On 17 February its leading article said, 'Aslef has a long history as one of the nation's most hated unions. It has brought misery to millions with strikes and go-slows. Only last summer it threatened strike chaos just when Britain was dealing with a major terrorist threat on the airlines.'

This bizarre and inaccurate rant was connected with the General Secretary having offered his personal support to Peter Hain - who the Sun hates because he is 'pro-union'.

The following week the same rag posed as our chum as it lifted and reproduced the editorial from last month's Journal, quoting Keith as he attacked rail privatisation.

Why the change of mind? They must have decided that members of a union they call 'the most hated' wouldn't buy their nonsense, and so offered a platitude to win us over.

'Our members don't buy the Sun,' Keith Norman explains. 'They prefer Andrex'



THE 'VOLUNTEERS' SPELL OUT THE SQUASH MESSAGE left to right: Julie Hunt from ASLEF's Industrial Relations Department; Marz Colombini Secretary of the Waterloo Nine Elms branch; Alex Leigh from the Admin Department; Health and Safety advisor Dave Bennett, Head of Policy Youssef Cockbaine and EC member Simon Weller. Photos: Els Dekker

ASLEF SQUASHES INTO LONDON BRIDGE!

TO MARK International Rail Safety Day on 13 March, ASLEF members drew attention to its 'Squash' campaign for improved conditions in cabs. Six campaigners dressed in costumes at London Bridge to reflect the demands the union is making for cabs that are Safe, Quiet, User-friendly, Air-conditioned, Specially seated and Healthy.

Executive committee members Terry Wilkinson and Simon Weller joined regional organiser Graham Morris and other activists from the southern region for a morning's leafleting, aimed at drawing the public's attention to the safety aspects of our campaign. Eddie Dickson from the International Transport Federation also joined the event. Eddie offered the ITF's full support for the Squash initiative on the grounds that it was 'not only a valid industrial claim, but also a significant improvement to rail safety'.

The six 'volunteers' had no sooner slipped into their white overalls than the station security staff arrived to accuse the group of obstruction and ask the photographer to cease snapping. 'We're not obstructing - we're leafleting!' came the response - and the event continued largely unhindered. One member of the public looked quite astonished as she said she couldn't believe anyone would want to oppose people at a station calling for improved rail safety.

ASLEF general secretary Keith Norman stressed, 'To ensure safety, train drivers need comfortable cabs in which they can remain alert and efficient. No matter how hard a driver tries, it is impossible to maintain necessary levels of concentration in a cab that lacks basic facilities - which today includes air-conditioning.'

The union points to evidence from the Rail Safety and Standards Board from July 2006 which showed that high temperatures increased potential hazards on the line by a massive 62%.



INTERNATIONAL RAIL SAFETY DAY



ASLEF campaigners at the 13 March event. Seventh from the right is regional organiser Graham Morris who played a major part in getting people along to London Bridge



Who wouldn't want to be lobbied by this fine collection of ASLEF manhood? From left: Kevin Eade, Dave Bull, Perry Calvert and Roy Luxford

ARE YOU SITTING COMFORTABLY?



These photos of a 319 cab makes the point very effectively that we need special seating for alert driving. The picture on the right shows the seat after repair!

More seriously, crushed or hollowed out seats are one of the most common problems and one that causes extreme discomfort to our drivers. The effect is to cut off the blood supply just behind the knee, and the added problem of having to press down on a very narrow strongly sprung DSD means that numbness and pain in the legs is common.



FEELING THE PINCH ON THE RAILWAYS

Around the country, people are fed up with overcrowded trains. **Vanessa Bulkacz** of Transport 2000 talks about what the Growing the Railways campaign is doing to improve the situation, and looks at one big fish's contribution to the cause ...

Transport 2000 launched the Growing the Railways campaign in October 2005 to highlight the problem of rail overcrowding and to call on the Government for greater investment in the rail network. This summer will see the release of a rail white paper and this is the opportunity to get a real commitment from the Government to expand the railways. The 30-year time frame covered by the White Paper means that we could at last get some long term planning, bringing rail capacity up to speed with planned development.

But overcrowding is with us now - journeys on Britain's railways exceeded 1 billion last year - the highest level since 1959 - and Network Rail estimates that demand for rail travel will grow by another two thirds over the next 20 years, even more in London and the Southeast. What will be the result? Massive rail



overcrowding nationwide, and a return to the car for those who can't face the prospect of travelling by train.

Despite the DfT's recent decision to provide TOCs with 1,000 new carriages by 2014, this 10% increase in capacity will only go a small way towards addressing the projected two-thirds increase in ridership over the next 20 years, projections which don't even take possible road pricing into account.

To draw in public support, Transport 2000 has sent a rail campaigning

superhero 'Sardine Man' to tour some of the overcrowding hotspots on our rail network. Our fishy friend talked to members of the public all over the country who are tired of being packed into trains like sardines. You can read some of their stories at www.sardineman.org.uk.

Alongside this and building up to the release of the White Paper, over the next few months Transport 2000 will be meeting with Transport Ministers to present research and regional manifestos for growth. We will outline why the government needs to invest in rail, specific areas of overcrowding around the country that need particular help, and what's needed, such as more frequent services, bringing unused rolling stock back into service, longer trains and platforms, improvements to tracks and signalling, having industry experts instead of bureaucrats write the timetables and pursuing partnerships with councils and others to bring in new funding for local projects. We also want to see the Government support railfreight growth through lines, terminals and higher/longer trains.

YOU CAN HELP You can do your part to help make government investment in rail happen. Write a letter to Douglas Alexander demanding government investment in a growing railway, and/or send your MP an electronic message through Sardine Man's website (www.sardineman.org.uk).



LUL 2006 PAY & CONDITIONS Members in LUL voted overwhelmingly (over 90% in favour) in a referendum to accept a three year pay offer that consists of a 4% increase in Year 1 (2006); 3% or Feb RPI plus 0.5% in Year 2 (2007); 3% or Feb RPI plus 0.6% in Year 2 (2008)
COMPANY COUNCIL ELECTION RESULTS
 Freightliner Intermodal Business Council Representative - North Constituency - Bro J Fallon, Crewe Branch: LUL Trains Functional Council Representative - Bro F Brennan - East Finchley/ Golders Green Branch and Bro T Cashman - West Brompton Branch: DRS Works Council Representative -

South Constituency - Bro G Boyle, Crewe Branch
CENTRAL TRAINS - REST DAY WORKING ASLEF is prepared to sanction Rest Day Working on Central Trains until 10 November 2007 subject to the continued monitoring by our representatives.

FIRST CAPITAL CONNECT - REST DAY WORKING ASLEF is prepared to sanction Rest Day Working on First Capital Connect until 30 May 2007 subject to continued monitoring by representatives.
CHILTERN RAILWAYS - REST DAY WORKING ASLEF is prepared to sanction Rest Day Working on Chiltern Railways until 30 June 2007 subject to continued monitoring by representatives.

FREIGHTLINER INTERMODAL - REST DAY WORKING ASLEF is prepared to sanction Rest Day Working on Freightliner Intermodal until 21 April 2007 subject to continued monitoring by representatives.

FIRST SCOTRAIL - REST DAY WORKING ASLEF is prepared to sanction Rest Day Working on First Scotrail until 31 March 2008 subject to continued monitoring by representatives.

FIRST SCOTRAIL - 2007 PAY OFFER Members voted by over 70% in favour of a revised First Scotrail pay offer for a 5.7% pay increase.

SOUTHERN SHUNTER DRIVERS - 35 HOUR WEEK Southern Shunter Driver members have accepted a revised offer for a 35 hour week.



The union's Freight Forum last month discussed the position on Class 66 cabs.

Freight to rail support

In a survey of MPs in February by the Parkside Alliance showed that 96% of MPs were in favour of shifting freight to rail with just 1% disagreeing. A similar question asked of the public in a YouGov survey revealed that 80% of the public also favoured the move. Another positive statistic shows that rail freight has grown by almost 50% over the last decade, increasing the market share of surface transport to 11.5%.

Ethical uniforms

London Underground is the first public body to join the Ethical Trading Initiative - an alliance of retailers, unions, charities and campaigning organisations that believe companies producing goods for the UK should observe national and international labour laws and standards. Gerry Duffy, director of LUL employee relations, says, 'suppliers of uniforms will have to demonstrate a commitment to ETI codes.'

USE YOUR VOTE TO HELP LABOUR KEEP SCOTLAND ON THE MOVE

... says Scotland's First Minister Jack McConnell

SCOTTISH LABOUR is committed to delivering on rail travel in Scotland. We know that people need to get to work safely and on time; that business in Scotland needs to transport goods quickly and efficiently; that Scotland needs the best international transport links to expand our growing tourist industry; and that transport policy needs to be sustainable, and include environmental responsibility.

Demand for rail travel has increased in recent years as our economy has grown, and in response, we are investing an unprecedented amount in the rail network, to address decades of under-investment during the Tory years. As a result, rail passenger numbers in Scotland have increased to the highest level since 1964, with 72.9 million rail passenger journeys originating in Scotland between 2004 and 2005.

To meet this new demand, since 1999, Labour have introduced 11 new rail stations and added 285 new railway carriages to the ScotRail franchise, creating approximately 12,000 more seats for passengers. And in a third term, Scottish Labour is determined to build upon this progress.

£325 MILLION BOOST FOR RAIL Scottish Labour also ensured that control of Scotland's railways was handed to Scottish Ministers – the largest single transfer of powers to the Scottish Parliament since devolution. This transfer coincided with a significant transfer of funding, approximately £325 million, in preparation for the next Scottish franchise, Scottish Labour will fully examine all options, to ensure value for money and greater public accountability.

We are determined to see an effective and efficient national transport infrastructure to support our growing economy and give businesses the infrastructure they need to expand and develop.

We have already made an ambitious start by supporting the development of Edinburgh Waverley train station, ensuring that Scotland's busiest station is fully capable of meeting the needs of the 21st century. We have just passed the Parliamentary Bills to enable us to start work on building the rail links to Glasgow and Edinburgh Airports and utility works have begun to ensure that Edinburgh once again has a tram network to support Scotland's flourishing capital city.

SNP – SORRY AND NEEDLESS POLICIES This is in stark contrast to the SNP, who have shown a clear commitment to taking Scotland's transport infrastructure back, denying Scotland's citizens and businesses the physical infrastructure necessary to compete in the global economy. Just this month, the SNP voted against the Edinburgh Tram Lines project and would scrap the vital Edinburgh Airport link – a critical piece of transport infrastructure and would not only give businesses in the city a boost, but would also have a vital impact on businesses across Scotland.

Scottish Labour, on the other hand, is determined to go further and faster with our national transport infrastructure plans, including examining expansion of the capacity of Glasgow Queen Street station through platform extensions. We will support the Glasgow Cross Rail project to complete the rail network in the west of Scotland and electrification of the main line between Glasgow and Edinburgh via Falkirk High and examine rail connections to ferry terminals to maximise the link-up with new or existing rail track.

COMMUNITIES MATTER Scottish Labour in government has also shown a genuine commitment to linking-up communities. We have re-opened the Larkhall to Milngavie line and the Kincadine-Stirling rail line will be completed in the autumn 2007; work will begin to reopen the Airdrie-Bathgate line later in 2007 and we



have supported the development of proposals to reopen the Borders rail line from Edinburgh to Tweedbank. In the future, we will look to complete the Ayr loop, to improve access between Glasgow and Ayrshire; open stations at Blackridge and Plains on the Airdrie to Bathgate rail line and will commission feasibility studies into the reopening of other railway lines – demonstrating a genuine commitment to re-connect Scotland's communities by rail.

PASSENGERS NOT CUSTOMERS In a third term, however, our rail priority, however, will be the passenger experience. We know that passengers want a rail service that is safe, reliable, efficient and clean and we will commit resources to ensure that this is achieved. We have taken steps to improve safety at railway stations, through the introduction of CCTV and improved lighting, so that now two thirds of rail journeys either begin or end at accredited Secure Stations. 91 trains are now fitted with CCTV. Scottish Labour's ambition is to double this number. The rail industry's safety record in Scotland is good and is improving. In government, we have successfully introduced the Train Protection and Warning System programme to improve safety by ensuring that trains approaching red signals and other hazards apply their brakes.

Scottish Labour will explore systems of through, or integrated ticketing on all forms of public transport, enhancing convenience for customers. We also intend to significantly increase the park and ride facilities at Scotland's train stations in order to create a more attractive alternative to using cars. And we are acutely aware that over 50% of rail stations either have poor access, or are completely inaccessible to people with mobility disabilities. As a result, Scottish Labour intends to examine ways in which stations and facilities are better able to fully cater for the needs of disabled passengers.

■ Jack McConnell grew up and was educated at Arran before becoming a maths teacher. After a period as Leader of Stirling District Council he became General Secretary of the Scottish Labour Party. In the 1999 Scottish election he was returned as MSP for Motherwell and Wishaw. Jack became Scotland's third First Minister in November 2001.

IT IS just 200 years since the Slave Trade was abolished in the UK – but there is still much to be done amidst the celebration of that important event. Today it is estimated that there are still at least 12 million men, women and children in slavery.

When many people think of slavery, the image that comes to mind is the buying and selling of people in the 1800s – but it is a scandalous fact that slavery continues today in various forms that include

Bonded labour – where people receive basic food and somewhere to live as 'payment' for their work

Early and forced marriage – where girls can be married as young as 8 and forced into a life of servitude

■ Forced labour – where people who are illegally recruited and forced to work usually under threats of violence or deportation

■ Slavery by descent – where children are born into a slave class or family

■ Trafficking – which is the transport and or trade of men, women and children for the purposes of forcing them into slavery - which often means into prostitution

■ Enforced child labour – a practice which has affected an estimated 126 million children around the world - and it is on the increase

This is why ASLEF supports Anti-Slavery International (ASI) in its efforts to eliminate all forms of slavery throughout the world.

ANTI-SLAVERY INTERNATIONAL

Anti-Slavery International (ASI) was founded in 1839, and is the world's oldest international human rights organisation. It works to end slavery, human trafficking, servitude and forced labour by exposing current cases of slavery,

200 YEARS AFTER ITS ABOLITION, SLAVERY IS STILL AN ISSUE

argues the union's equalities advisor Sharon Allen

campaigning for its eradication, supporting the initiatives of local organisations to release people, and pressing for more effective implementation of international laws against slavery. They work by

■ Urging governments of countries with slavery to develop and implement measures to end it

■ Lobbying governments and international agencies to make slavery a priority issue

■ Supporting research to assess the scale of slavery in order to identify measures to end it

■ Working with local organisations to raise public awareness of slavery

■ Educating the public about the realities of slavery and campaigning for its end.

JOIN THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM 1807-2007

ASI will be celebrating the achievement of the broad coalition that formed against the Transatlantic Slave Trade and calling on today's public to 'harness the abolitionist spirit' to end slavery once and for all. By revitalising the 1807 spirit we can make the abolition of all forms of slavery, in law and in practice, a priority for every government in the world.

The mass movement that led to Britain abolishing the slave trade throughout its colonies in 1807 was the first of its kind. All sections of society were mobilised, including Africans who, through rebellions, personal acts of resistance and as anti-slavery campaigners in their own right, came together to end the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

'Public action helped achieve the abolition of the slave trade in 1807. Today we need to recreate the people-power of the past. With mass public action we can achieve even more today and make the elimination of slavery a reality once and for all,' says Mary Cunneen, the Director of Anti-Slavery International. 'Not only does slavery need to be eliminated, but the legacies of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, including racism and discrimination, must be addressed.'

ASI argues that the UK government has a part to play and urges it to take constructive steps to address these legacies, including making lessons about the history of slavery as part of the National Educational Curriculum and instituting a National Slavery Memorial Day.

RECENT SUCCESSES

To show the present-day importance of anti-slavery activities, these are some of ASI's successes over the past few years:

■ In 2003 in Niger the Government introduced a new law against slavery with sentences of 30 years in prison for offenders. Within six months of this measure over 200 slaves were freed

■ In 2002, after years of pressure from ASI, the Nepalese Government passed a law declaring bonded labour illegal

■ In 2001, ASI launched a campaign against human trafficking, which has successfully raised awareness and led to increased action to end the modern-day slave trade

■ In 2000, ASI initiated a

new programme with local partners in six West African countries to end the cross border trafficking of children, leading to the first anti-trafficking network of its kind in the region.

ACTION AND MORE INFORMATION

ASI welcomes sympathisers to sign its 'Fight for Freedom Declaration' on its website which is at www.antislavery.org

UNESCO's International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition, commemorates the world's first successful uprising by enslaved Africans in Haiti which began in August 1791. The revolt led to the establishment of the black-led state in the Caribbean.

■ For more information on slavery and the ASI, speak to your District's Black and Ethnic Members' Consultative Committee or contact Sharon Allen at headquarters on 0207 317 8600 or by email at sallen@aslef.org.uk



Campaigners continue the fight to abolish slavery

A BLACK DAY AT GRAYRIGG



Iain Black:
ASLEF's
reluctant hero

NEWs of the derailment at Grayrigg, Cumbria began to filter through to ASLEF officials early on the evening of 23 February. It is always difficult to assess exactly what has actually happened in these circumstances – media reports are too often weighted in favour of the sensational rather than strictly truthful. Nevertheless, it was quickly apparent that there had been a major incident.

Keith Norman defined three immediate priorities for ASLEF. These were

- To ensure that the driver lacked for nothing
- To make sure the union gave the sort of informed thoughtful response that would be expected of a professional trade union - and didn't engage in speculation about what might have happened
- To stress that rail is still, by a long way, the safest form of transport in the country.

The union found an immediate ally in Virgin boss Richard Branson, who declared the driver, Iain Black, to be 'a hero'. It was a theme taken up by the three main spokespeople put up by the union – Andy Reed, Kevin Lindsay and Colin Smith.

Kevin and Colin went to the hospital in Preston where they spoke to Iain, offering him support and conveying the sympathy of all our members. Later they made statements to the media about his

condition, stressing that Iain was 'a reluctant hero, but a hero for all that'. He was suffering from a broken collarbone, a broken bone in his neck, back problems and cuts and bruises all over his body. It was expected then that he would remain in hospital for a month.

WHERE WE STAND

We were able to put out a statement to the media, which was also posted on the ASLEF website (aslef.org.uk) which read:

Cumbria crash - ASLEF will play full part in enquiry

ASLEF General Secretary Keith Norman says the crash in Cumbria is a terrible time for everyone concerned with the rail industry in the UK.

'Naturally our first concern is with our driver and our sympathy is with all those injured in the incident,' Keith said as he congratulated the emergency services on a timely and excellent job.

Keith said that the train in question – a Pendolino – had 'come through this terrible test remarkably well in safety terms' and pledged the union to play a full and positive part in the enquiry.

Despite yesterday's tragedy, Keith insists that rail is the safety form of travel in the UK.

The union was featured on BBC, ITV, Sky, all the national newspapers and too many radio outlets to mention.

INTERIM REPORT

The first 'interim' report was issued on the Monday afternoon. Produced only

three days after the derailment, it understandably contained little firm information and no conclusions.

Accident investigator Thomas Edwards said, 'The full investigation itself is going to take months, I'm afraid, because there will be a wealth of detail to go through very, very carefully.'

The main features of the report, writes ASLEF health and safety advisor Dave Bennet, are as follows: .

Network Rail says it has, within these two days, checked 700 similar points, but found nothing wrong with them.

The design of the facing points had one lock bar and three stretcher bars. One of three stretcher bars was missing.

Bolts that secured the lock bar were not in place. Some were found in the ballast, some were not.

The result was that no complete stretcher bar was in place between the switch rails, leaving the left hand rail free to move.

Marks on the crossover show that both switch blades were in contact or very close to their respective rail stock. This meant that the gauge was narrowing as the train moved forward.

Network Rail had no faults logged at these points.

There is no evidence that the condition or driving of the train, or the signaling control system contributed to the accident.

In conclusion, the points were the

GRAYRIGG

immediate cause of the accident.

HANDS ACROSS THE WATER

The union has received messages of sympathy from unions across Europe - and was very grateful for this international concern. Typical was the letter from Christian Joncret, a leader of the CGT union in France, who wrote offering any assistance they could offer, adding, 'Our members would like to send their solidarity and support to all those touched by this incident.'

Keith Norman says this is one of the times that the whole train driving community comes together. 'ASLEF is more than just a union,' he says. 'We are a family of drivers who work and stick together. This type of incident bonds us all. When I offer my sympathy and concern for Iain, I know I do so on behalf of every single ASLEF member in the country - and tens of thousands of drivers abroad,' he said.

'NO PANIC, JUST A STRANGE NUMBNESS' - SAYS ASLEF PASSENGER

One of the passengers on the Pendolino that derailed at Grayrigg in Cumbria on 23 February was EWS driver Nick Roberts. Nick is based in Warrington and was on his way to work in Carlyle. Nick has been driving for 30 years and because he has been involved in derailments before, he was more aware of what was happening than else on the train - with the exception of Iain Black.

'I was in coach B, which ended up on the bank,' he says. 'When I heard the initial bang, I knew from the sound that the train was running on the ballast.'

Inexplicably, Nick says he felt very little at the time. 'I braced myself, unsure about what was going to happen. It seemed to be slowing, but then suddenly the lights went and we were swaying and lurching. Then we seemed to glide gently to a halt.'

Nick doesn't remember being thrown, but found himself up near the luggage racks, lying on his back with his feet in the air.

'There was no panic in the carriage,' he says. 'In fact, it seemed unnaturally calm and quiet.'

Within ten minutes there were external lights and a long step ladder arrived. Nick made his way out of the train through a window.

'Outside I noticed one woman holding my fleece - and another wearing my coat! It was also odd that I found my mobile phone lying on the ground.'

The passengers all went to an adjacent farm where they were offered tea and sympathy - some even watched the



Network Rail - our lives in their hands

event on the television. Very shortly paramedics arrived offering assistance, but Nick was numbed by the experience and didn't really feel his cuts and bruises until much later.

Remarkably, even after his experience, Nick was back at work doing some light duties the Tuesday after the incident.

OTHER PASSENGERS SAY 'THANKS ASLEF'

A number of passengers wrote to the union after the derailment - here are a couple of examples

Peter Sweetman from Surrey wrote, 'As a regular traveller on the WCML with Virgin Trains, I would like to thank your drivers for their professionalism and extend my good wishes to your colleague who was injured in the recent sad accident.'

If the investigation results in blame being assigned to poor track

maintenance, I hope ASLEF will press for true accountability of those at fault in the criminal courts.'

A passenger called Malcolm emailed the union with this message, 'I'm not an ASLEF member but I am a regular passenger on the railway.'

I am writing in the hope that you can pass my very best wishes to Iain Black. I hope he makes a rapid physical and mental recovery.

Those good wishes also extend to the other on-board crew who must have mental anguish at the very least.

I share the distress about the fatality and injury to passengers, but my concern here is for the railway staff.

I found the media report to be crass and stupid - but I conclude with repeating my best wishes and many thanks to all the wonderful professional drivers.'

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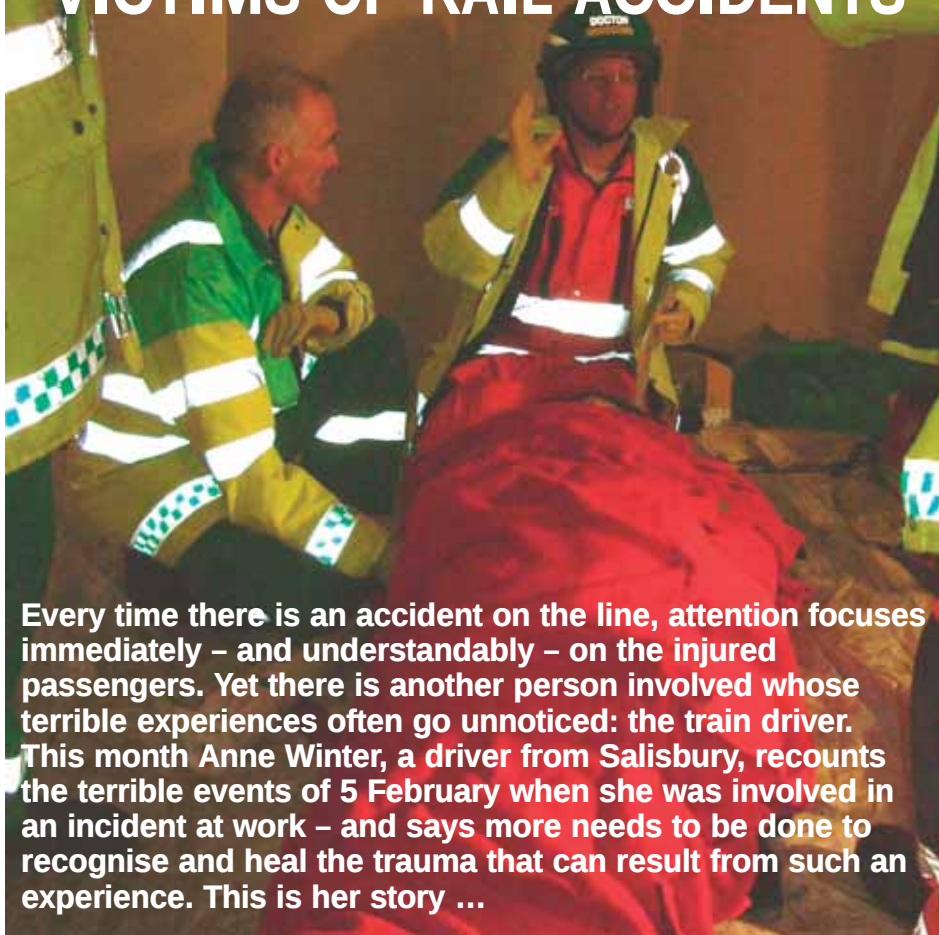
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DRIVERS: THE UNRECOGNISED VICTIMS OF RAIL ACCIDENTS



Every time there is an accident on the line, attention focuses immediately – and understandably – on the injured passengers. Yet there is another person involved whose terrible experiences often go unnoticed: the train driver. This month Anne Winter, a driver from Salisbury, recounts the terrible events of 5 February when she was involved in an incident at work – and says more needs to be done to recognise and heal the trauma that can result from such an experience. This is her story ...

'ON 5th February an escaped mental patient tried to commit suicide under my wheels, but failed, sustaining only head injuries. 'Unfortunately for me (but luckily for him) he was mobile enough to make his way to the front of the train where I was already terror-struck by the events of hitting him, and he appeared like a bloody apparition in the headlights. The result of this is that I have been off sick since then suffering from Post Traumatic Stress;

hallucinating during the day and suffering horrendous nightmares at night.

'From the time of the incident I felt totally out of control of the situation as I had no idea what the procedures were or what I might experience in the aftermath. If a female driver who had suffered a fatality 18 months previously had not slipped her 'phone number into my hand that night I would have remained completely in the dark, but thanks to her I took control of

some of the things I could – such as telling my DSM I'd call him in future instead of finding him on the end of the 'phone when I least expected it - or wanted it.

'She also reassured me that what I was feeling was normal in the circumstances.

'It would appear that the railway has learned nothing over the years about sympathetic and helpful practical handling of these cases, as I'm writing this on a day when I failed to make the journey to Occupational Health in London. This was because just hearing the engines of a 159 unit transported me back to the last time I'd heard them - which was the evening of the incident. All this has set my recovery back once again.

'I'd already expressed concerns to my manager (via my LDC rep) about whether I was up to taking such a big step after only three weeks. My counsellor also thought it was a bad idea.

'Isn't it about time that a standard was set and guidelines were drawn up regarding information and help for drivers caught up in these sort of circumstances, based on the experiences of drivers who have already 'been there'?

'Perhaps a brief fact sheet could be available to be handed to drivers involved in incidents giving details of what they may feel, what happens next, what their options are, and where they can go for help and advice?

'Is it a possibility that a register of drivers who have had incidents and would be willing to mentor other drivers in similar circumstances could be produced? At a time when you are least able to stand up for yourself it would be wonderful if such a driver could speak up for you.

'I apologise for the length of this letter but I feel very strongly that this issue needs addressing. Can I also take this opportunity to give special thanks to Salisbury Branch Secretary Tom Corbin, LDC rep. Bob Thompson, and Donna for their recent and continuing support.'

RAIL IS STILL THE SAFEST FORM OF TRANSPORT

IN THE aftermath of an incident such as that at Grayrigg, our televisions and newspapers are covered with words and images of crashed and derailed trains. If we're not careful we risk giving the impression that rail accidents are an everyday event. That is completely untrue.

'Rail is the safest form of transport in the UK,' Keith Norman insisted on the day of the Cumbria derailment. 'That is not to say that we should ever be complacent about safety – it is rather an incentive to be even more conscientious. It is one of our industry's major selling points.'

However, as Keith points out, the media is interested in things that are unusual: and rail incidents fit this category. For the

record, since the year 2000 there have been seven accidents which have involved fatalities. They were

- February 2007 : An elderly woman died at Grayrigg in Cumbria when a train derailed. July 2005: A train driver was killed following a level-crossing collision in Kent.
- 6 November 2004: Seven people, including the driver, died when a high-speed London to Plymouth train hit a car parked on a level crossing at Ufton Nervet.
- August 2003: A train driver died after colliding with a car at a level crossing in Kent.
- 10 May 2002: Seven people were killed and over 70 injured when a WAGN service from London to King's Lynn crashed at

Potters Bar.

● 28 February 2001: Ten people were killed when a GNER train from York to London King's Cross crashed at Great Heck, North Yorkshire.

● 17 October 2000: Four people were killed and a further 35 hurt when a GNER London to Leeds train derailed at Hatfield.

While these figures are obviously of great concern to all in the rail industry, they should be compared with the number of fatalities on UK roads where the numbers are as follows:

- 2004 a total of 3,221 people died
- 2005 a total of 3,201 people died
- 2003 a total of 3,508 people died

'We will never cease in our endeavours to ensure the maximum safety for UK rail,' Keith says. 'But it would be wrong to suggest that rail is an unsafe mode of transport.'



Vicky Phillips looks at some of the legal enquiries raised with Thompsons last month. If YOU have a legal query, work-related or not, please send it to the Journal at 9 Arkwright Road London NW3 6AB or email journal@aslef.org.uk – and we'll ask Vicky to offer a professional view.



There are agency workers at my depot. Do they have the same rights as employees and can they join a union?

Agency workers don't have the same rights as permanent employees - and that's bad not just for them but for all workers. Agency workers are usually paid less than employees and are therefore used as a source of cheap labour by many employers, reducing employment opportunities for others.

Agency workers have no job security, get fewer holidays and are not entitled to sick pay or to join company pension schemes. Even if they work at the same company for over a year they do not get the same employment rights, such as the right not to be unfairly dismissed, as employees.

The government promised improvements in the Warwick

agreement, but it has only just put forward proposals for legislation, and these do not go far enough towards achieving equality for agency workers. Trade unions and the TUC will be saying so in their response to the consultation.

A private members' bill put forward by Labour MP Paul Farrelly with the support of the trade unions would have given agency workers equal rights. However, it was 'talked out of time' in the House of Commons and so cannot become law.

Agency workers do however have the right to join a trade union and members should aim to recruit them in order that they have a voice at work. But doing so can be a real problem for unions as the temporary nature of agency workers' work means they are often reluctant to commit to membership of a union or they are soon 'lost' to the union when they move to work elsewhere.



What are my rights to apply to work flexibly? What is the process for applying? And what can I do if the employer refuses?

Employees with children under 6 or disabled children under 18 have the right to ask their employer to consider a request for flexible working. The Work and Families Act also introduces a new right for carers of adults to request to work flexibly, from 6 April 2007.

Flexible working can include part-time work, using flexi-time, varying the hours you start and finish work, your patterns and place of work and job sharing. You should first get advice from your ASLEF rep, as your contract of employment or locally negotiated agreement may provide for different arrangements to that laid down in law.

Your employer has a statutory duty to give serious consideration to any request to work flexibly and can only refuse it if there are clear and permissible business grounds for doing so. However, the remedies available to you if they refuse your request are limited.

Any request to work flexibly must be put in writing, stating that it is being made under the statutory right to apply for flexible working. You must confirm your relationship to the child and set out your proposed change to your working patterns. You must have 26 weeks continuous service.

Importantly, you must explain what effect you think this change will have on your employer (i.e. would they have to find other staff to cover for you) and how you think they might deal with this. You must also state if you have made a previous application and if so when.

Your employer must either respond with an agreement within 28 days of receiving your application or must request a meeting with you to discuss it. They must then notify you in writing within 14 days of the meeting of their decision. If the employer refuses your request they must set out the clear business reasons as to why, and must inform you of the appeals process.

Your grounds for complaint to an employment tribunal are fairly limited, and depend primarily on whether your employer complied with the procedures, based their decision on correct facts or rejected your application on a business ground which they cannot justify or is not permitted.

The ET can either make you a monetary award, limited to eight weeks' pay (capped at £310 a week), or order your employer to reconsider.

It may also be possible to pursue a sex discrimination claim, but again, legal advice through ASLEF should be sought first.

■ This column is prepared as general advice and should not be relied on without taking specific advice about your situation. If you think you may have a legal case act quickly, there are strict time limits for bringing most claims. Call 0808 100 80 09. If you have a problem at work contact your local representative urgently.

KEEPING TRACK WHAT THE UNION WAS DOING 100 AND 50 YEARS AGO

As we look through the pages of ASLEF's Locomotive Journal 100 and 50 years ago, we find saucy suggestions about drivers in Edge Hill, a warning about safety standards and speed of trains and a row about NHS expenditure. Some things never change

100 YEARS AGO

In April 1907 a Mr Bank Engine addressed the problem of attendance at branch meetings at Edge Hill. He came up with a surprising conclusion – the problem was love! “We held our branch meeting on Sunday, March 3rd, when there was only a small attendance. We had a new member or two, however, to gladden our eyes. We had one member present who, owing to a little bad luck he has had lately, found it too much for him to pay full benefit contributions; he was suitably dealt with. We elected stewards to attend the open meeting to be held in the Picton Lecture Hall, on Sunday, March 17th, and also the open meeting at Birkenhead, on the evening of the same day. We are expecting great things from the open meeting at the Picton Hall, as handbills are being freely distributed, and many non-members have promised to attend. May they all come away converted. Every member present promised to do all that lay in his power to publish the meeting and request our men to attend.

There is one drawback we have at Edge Hill; I am afraid that a good many of our members are in love. They are that busy and worked so hard through the week that they cannot do without the comforting help of an assistant engine on a Sunday. That they would find time to do their courting on three Sundays and attend our meetings on one Sunday per month is the wish of BANK ENGINE”

50 YEARS AGO ...

In April 1957 the Scottish Notes (by ‘Benachie’) talked about the Modernisation Plan calling for the end of steam traction (which finally ended in August 1968) and wondered about safety standards ... before going on to complain about money for the NHS ...

“Acceleration of its plans to bring British Railways up to date, by the Transport Commission, conjures up visions of widespread changes in practices. Indeed, the very thought of trains travelling at 100 miles per hour in 1958 must excite those who regard our express trains as hopelessly old-fashioned on the present timings.

As a practical railwayman, I confess that speed is a factor which cannot be overlooked, but there are many other factors which must be taken into consideration when modernisation is being applied, and the most important one, to my mind, is safety.....as it involves eliminating the second man on the front end in most cases, it is one that gives food for thought. Electrification and dieselization - although many years behind – may prove a blessing in many respects to the economic position of the railways, but there are many problems which beset the efforts of those who are charged with the bringing of the railways up to date.....let us realise that steam locomotion will be in vogue for a long time yet....”

The Scottish Notes then went on to point out that despite promises, spending on the NHS was declining ...

“It cannot be forgotten how bitterly the Opposition opposed the introduction of the National Health Service by Aneurin Bevan in the House of Commons – even although now, in power, they claim to have made it possible – and we can be sure that no stone will be left unturned by those responsible to divorce the Health Service from general taxation to the detriment of those in the smallest income groups. An independent inquiry made into the service showed that the proportion of national income being spent on health in the fifth year of its operation was going down and not up – as many antagonists had been contending -which thus disproved the theory that the cost of the Service was “running away” with our “national resources”.

(Extracts selected and edited by Jane Pimlott)

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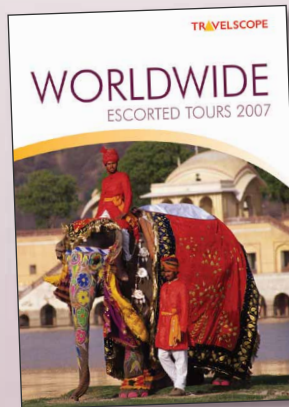
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Remembering John Axon, holder of the George Cross

TOSH MCDONALD, the union's vice-president, was one of those representing ASLEF on 9 February at a commemoration of Driver John Axon, GC, at Chapel-en-le-Frith station in the Derbyshire peak district.

Tosh writes that at the ceremony a plaque was unveiled and a Northern Rail train was named 'Driver John Axon'. Fifty years before to the day, Driver Axon was killed – along with his guard John Creamer – at a train crash at the station.

Driver Axon (from Edgeley Depot) was posthumously awarded the George Cross for his bravery in trying to bring his runaway freight train under control on a 1 in 58 gradient after a brake failure.

He had noticed a leak from the supply to the locomotive steam brake, and had requested and received fitter's attention at the Buxton depot. On the return trip from Buxton to Stockport the repair did not hold and the supply pipe broke away from the steam brake disabling the locomotive steam brake and whistle. This filled the cab with scalding steam and



prevented Driver Axon and Fireman Ron Scanlon from reaching the controls.

After getting his fireman Scanlon to jump from the loco and attempt to pin down wagon brakes Driver Axon stayed with his accelerating train despite the scalding steam on the footplate. He probably hoped to regain control of his train but must have known the chances were slim.

He was the subject of a famous radio ballad (The Ballad of John Axon), written by Ewan McColl and Peggy Seeger and produced by Charles Parker.



District Organiser Colin Smith presented an ASLEF plate to Melanie Axon (John's granddaughter) on behalf of all train Drivers past and present. The union was also represented by two former EC presidents - Bill Ronksley and Terry Clark – as well as retired member's chair Ray Jackson and a number of active and retired drivers from the area.

Norwich reunion

THE annual reunion of ASLEF members and friends in Norwich will take place at the Arkwright Club in the city on 20 April at 2000.

Retired members from other branches are welcome to attend an evening of nostalgia – with the chance to renew friendships which have developed over many decades.

If you need any more encouragement - John Pipe tells us there will be a free bar and buffet!

'Keep in touch' Stratford tell colleagues

AT THE February meeting of the Stratford Branch we had privilege to 'catch-up' with two recently retired members. It was an occasion filled with mixed emotions of being happy to congratulate them on their path into retirement yet sadness that they leave us. They will be sadly missed - although they have been instructed to keep in touch!

Bob and George both retired in late 2006, having amassed over 80 years service along with over 77 years membership of ASLEF between the two of them. It gave us great pleasure in being able to show a small token of our appreciation by presenting them with their Retirement Certificates. This was followed by adjourning to the bar to raise a glass (or two) to mark their achievement, and to wish them a long, happy and healthy retirement!

John Thorpe LDC Rep -
One Railway Liverpool Street



(L-R) Bob Mosby, Branch member Dave Pizzie, George Scott and Stratford Branch Secretary Peter Dodgson.



Labouring for Wales

John Boreham from ASLEF's Carmarthen Branch represented the union at the Wales Labour Party in Llandudno last month and sent us this report ...

It was an honour to represent ASLEF at this year's Wales Labour Party conference. As this was the first time I had been the union's delegate I must begin my report by thanking District Organiser Stan Moran for steering me through the many meetings and introducing me to a host of contacts I hope will be useful to ASLEF in the future. Thanks also to Mike McCarthy for withdrawing his candidacy and allowing me to attend as ASLEF's delegate without needing an election.

Tony Blair, in his farewell speech to delegates, stressed the huge strides that Wales has made over the last 10 years under a Labour government and with a Labour-led National Assembly.

Peter Hain stressed the importance of Labour winning a majority in the Welsh Assembly elections in May – echoing the conference's abiding message that all Labour Party members must get out and vote because a vote uncast will be a voter or a Tory-led coalition in Wales. Scottish Secretary Douglas Alexander made a well-received humorous overview of where we stood in Wales.

I took away the firm impression that ASLEF needs to take its place within the Labour movement both to increase our profile and credibility - and so we can offer our support for others.



STEVE (and son Christopher, now 18) on the campaign trail with Peter Hain in April 1991

A man of rails and Wales

'I LEFT school one Friday, and I started work on the railway on the Monday,' Steve Williams says. 'It was 1974 and I was 16 years old. I'll tell you this – my job interview wasn't like anything you'd get today! There wasn't any vetting or forms or equal opportunities.'

'My father was a carpenter, but our neighbour (in Margam near Neath) was a railway worker. He said the railways were 'looking for people' and asked if I'd be interested. I said I didn't mind, and went down to the depot for an interview.'

'I was asked a few maths and English questions, showed my references from two head teachers and filled in a form. The boss looked at the form for a minute and passed it back. 'You've called your school a 'comp', he said. 'If you can amend that and spell 'comprehensive' – you're in!'

Steve joined the industry as a traction trainee – and although he joined ASLEF on the same day, he claims no credit for the decision. 'We were given three things to sign: a pension form, a pass form – and an ASLEF membership form. That was how it was in those days –

you went to work and you joined the union. You wouldn't have dared not join!'

When Steve first worked at Margam there were about 70 drivers and a similar number of 'second men' and 'a shed-full' of guards. This was before the Thatcher-inspired big industrial disputes and cruel job losses in the '80s that were so crucial to Steve's political development.

'You couldn't avoid taking sides even if you'd wanted,' he says. 'The Thatcher government was all about confrontation. First we had the 13-week strike of steel workers, then there was our own flexible rostering strike – and finally she went for the miners.' He shakes his head in disbelief to what 'that woman' did to the communities of South Wales.

'She was a cruel woman and did terrible things to Wales. But – and it seems wrong to say it – she made our communities stronger than they'd ever been. There are dozens of people I met during the miner's strike I still talk to, who I think of as friends. We learned a lot about the value of our communities even as she tried to break them apart'

Steve was soon involved in

local union activities and inevitably to the Labour Party. He worked in union support groups and fund-raising for the families of striking miners, eventually becoming Chair of his local Trades Council. 'We'd organise collections at work, take food parcels up on Thursdays and put on Christmas parties for the kids. It's like we went through a war together.'

Steve left Wales for Old Oak Common in London for three years after qualifying as a second man. 'It seemed much further away then than it does now!' he says. Living in the railway hostel was a great adventure at the time – 'going somewhere your mother didn't know what you were up to!' Five boys from Wales went at the same time: two still work in the industry.

'Then I went back to Swansea before moving back to Margam on a promotion. I lost money on it! Honestly, I did! There was overtime by the shovelful in Swansea and none at all in Margam. But I became a driver, which is what I wanted.'

Steve became active in the union, serving as a divisional council representative for six remarkable years. 'It was a time of huge change. We

were the first council to negotiate a DRI deal – and our agreement became a template for the rest of the country. It ended up with us giving up a lot of allowances – but our official take home pay increased by 83% and we got two hours off the working week.

'We re-wrote the whole conditions of service book. From scratch. Promotion, redundancy, everything. It was a hell of a time.'

Since then Steve has been more active in the Labour Party than the union and campaigned hard for Welsh devolution. In 2004 he was elected to the Neath and Port Talbot Country Borough Council, with its 160,000 constituents and £350 million budget.

'I do enjoy it,' he admits. 'But you don't know what you're letting yourself in for. I'm on four major committees – including transport, of course – but you also pick up other jobs, like school governor – as well. Yes, it takes time – but I've always been community minded. Thatcher saw to that.'

Steve's married to Sandra, a former USDAW activist who worked for local MP Peter Hain and now works for Wales enterprise minister Andrew Davies – who wrote for the Journal in our February edition. 'ASLEF's another community I feel and share,' he says. 'Looking back, I'm glad I had the right neighbour in 1974.'



STEVE visits the union headquarters at Arkwright Road

Would you be prepared to be featured in future editions of this column, or know someone who would be a good subject? If you do, please let us know at the ASLEF Journal, 9 Arkwright Road, London NW3 6AB or journal@aslef.org.uk

LETTERS to the EDITOR



YOU TELL US

These are the pages where you talk to us. We welcome your letters, either by mail to the Journal at 9 Arkwright Road London NW3 6AB or by email to journal@aslef.org.uk

Because of our space constraints, please try to keep your contributions as short as you can.

This month we continue our STAR LETTER feature. The immensely lucky winner will pocket a rich range of ASLEF regalia!



Star letter

THIS month's star letter award has gone to Anne Winter whose letter about drivers involved in train accidents is published on page 15 of this edition.

Squash litters my cab!

THE poor class 66 cab environment has now become even worse.

We now have to contend with large numbers of 'SQUASH' stickers all over the inside. Some drivers have gone crazy with these stickers and put them everywhere, except places where they might do some good.

Arno Brooks Chairman - Knottingly / Ferrybridge branch

Break down political fund

I READ with interest Bro Moloney's views on the political fund in the February Journal.

I have been considering withdrawing from this contribution but have been reluctant to do so because I know some of it is used for things like educational opportunities for the members. I have also been

surprised that some members don't know they are paying it, or that the Rule Book makes it clear they can opt out. Other colleagues not paying now might be prepared to contribute towards things that will directly benefit the membership.

I feel we get little return for money we spend lobbying MPs. There is little evidence of improvements to our railways and our pleas continually fall on deaf ears. We've also got someone I regard as a political appointee in charge of Network Rail – a man who is on record as saying that he feels that some passengers would be better served by bus or taxi! I think we are throwing good money away.

That is why I have sought my branch's support in putting forward a proposal for the AAD to break down the spending of the political fund so that members can decide which part(s) they would prefer to pay – all, either or none as they feel fits their belief.

I would urge any other like-minded members to approach their branch and see if there is any support for a change and perhaps also forward their views for the AAD to consider.

Peter Flett Shipley - West Yorkshire

Over and out

MANY thanks to those who have supported me over the last six years in my time on the Drivers Company Council – and special thanks to Ashford, Battersea, Dover, Faversham, Hastings, Orpington, and Tonbridge who voted for me in this last election. It hasn't always been a pleasure to represent you at council level – but it has certainly been an honour and a privilege.

I have worked with some

truly loyal and respectful people, not only within my own council, but also in South West Trains and Southern. I'd like to make a special mention of Graham Morris, Graham Walker, Roy Luxford, Nigel Cummins, Pete Rowland and Perry Calvert – and to thank them for their guidance and friendship.

My ambitions when I took on this job were to better ourselves as a grade and as a trade union within District No1. I believe that I achieved these two items, and many others. For me it was only ever about us. I never wavered from that point and principle.

ASLEF itself has given me the opportunity to better myself both educationally and morally to better myself. I am grateful for that – and long may it continue for other representatives in the future.

Lastly I'd like to thank my wife and children who have coped with all the baggage that goes with being on Drivers Company Council. I could not have done it without their support.

Bill Williams Faversham Branch

First Group unwelcome in the hillsides

I WELCOME the General Secretary's recent comments about First Group in South Wales.

South Wales - along with the Devon and Cornish branch lines – need the lack of interest in the level of service provided by the major franchise holder to be flagged up in any forum that will listen.

Housing expansion in the Severn Tunnel Junction area suggests planners should be looking at an HST service to London – but STJ passengers

are rewarded with cuts to the already-infrequent Bristol service that existed before 10 December.

The issue of a free bus pass to retired persons is to be welcomed - or is it? Which would you choose out of paying £3-£4 on a train journey or nothing on a bus?

This loads the argument for any reduction (or closure) of branch lines services, in favour of the bus company who just happen to beFirst Group!

The bus pass should be a 'travel pass' enabling the retired pass holders to make their own minds as to which mode of transport they prefer, thus at least making it a level playing field when doing passenger head counts.

I wonder, is it co-incidental, that FGW have asked for 'more time' to consider the request for the issuing of a FGW train pass for its own retired staff?

Brian Jones Swansea branch

Well done, ASLEF!

I'M A fellow member of ASLEF and have been since becoming a train driver with Central Trains at Birmingham New Street five years ago. During this time I have had a fair share of 'run-in's' with my management - but that's not why I've felt compelled to contact you.

I simply wanted to pay tribute to ASLEF's staff representatives – people like Bill Goode, Tim Inston, Phil Baker, Steve Braddick and Jeoff (aka 'Bungle'). Our local reps are seldom thanked or congratulated – and I'd like to put that right.

These people helped me through traumatic times with their professionalism and understanding and I am grateful for all the support I



High flying Branson had low visibility on rail

I WAS amazed to see Sir Richard Branson on the track at Grayrigg without a high-visibility vest. One of his fellow managers should have had the balls to let him know he was setting a very poor example.

Mr Branson may be a charming man and a successful entrepreneur – but he's certainly not a railwayman!

If his workforce appeared on the track without protective clothing, they'd soon be up before their managers. I also wonder if Mr Branson has involved his local workplace health and safety rep in the investigation as per the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act.

Act now and save the forest ...!



WE ALL deeply regret the loss of life and injury arising from the Cumbria accident and our thoughts must also be with our colleague who endured the trauma.

Before tonnes of newsprint is lavished on debating corporate manslaughter again may I appeal to all sides not to waste their time and effort because, in my opinion, it cannot, and will not happen until we have a real Railway Safety Act with appointed persons having statutory responsibility in their various disciplines.

R W McMillan Wolverhampton

have received. At times I felt that if the union had not intervened I could have lost my job.

I'm proud to be a member of this union and to know that I am part of a brotherhood that cares about other fellow drivers irrespective of colour or creed.

Bro Baghan Birmingham

Optional 60 retirement?

OUR union policy is that we should be compulsorily retired at 60 - whether we like it or not.

I started as a secondman in 1973. I am now 54 and have a great job driving with Freightliner. I like my job and don't want to retire early. I also want to help my daughter financially through her studies at university and medical school. I resent the view that I should stop working to become a pensioner when I am still active, capable and satisfied with my job and earning good money.

It is very easy making dogmatic decisions about how other people should lead their lives but many of us don't relish the prospect of becoming pensioners. Optional retirement at 60 would be good for some people but compulsory retirement for someone fit, healthy and motivated is an unacceptable form of ageism.

Arno Brooks Chairman - Knottingly and Ferrybridge Branch

Accommodation sought

WHAT IS ASLEF's policy on drivers who are accommodated working overtime, rest days and Sundays?

ASLEF is pushing for family friendly conditions and for drivers who have to be accommodated for personal reasons - but are they making sure that nobody is abusing the situation?

How can a driver ask to be accommodated on certain shifts to look after a family member, then work every rest day and Sunday? When drivers are accommodated, the rest of us have to cover for them often at the most unsocial times. I do not mind covering for a driver who has a genuine problem, but if drivers are working all the overtime going, how can they ask to be accommodated? They are taking the Mickey out of the rest of us - and all accommodated drivers will be tarred with the same brush, spoiling it for the genuine ones.

This is not sour grapes because someone has worked more rest days than me. I don't work Sundays. However drivers who wish to work them find that they often can't because of their shifts. Accommodated drivers, on the other hand, can be available for all of them.

OBITUARY

It is with great sadness that I report the sudden death of Inverness Branch member Bro Geoff Kerr, who died at the age of 47 while out jogging.

Geoff started his railway career at Dundee as a second man before becoming a driver at Perth Depot. He moved to Inverness as a driver team manager and latterly was accommodated on platform duties. Throughout his career he was a proud ASLEF member.

Our thoughts are with Geoff's wife Linda and the family.

Anthony Fraser Secretary - Inverness Branch

ASLEF can not say it is down to the TOCs as it is the union that's pushing for these policies - and it is ASLEF who are supposed to be protecting the genuine ones - and the rest of us who have to cover for them.

Paul Smith Derby

Point about Grayrigg

REPORTING of the Cumbria derailment shows the press and TV channels misleading the public. Pictures issued in various news outlets show trailing points. We industry-insiders know trailing points are unlikely to cause a derailment. I hope the situation is clarified and these termites can have the ridicule they deserve heaped upon them.

Trevor Perkins retired member - Leicester

Get on the telly

THIS branch feel disgusted that no form of public acknowledgement has been made regarding the derailment of the Virgin train at Grayrigg on 23 February.

T.E.S.S.A and R.M.T. have

both been in the news and stated concerns over this incident. Yet ASLEF, the union of the Driver, Bro Iain Black, has yet to make any form of public comment. This we feel is a disgrace.

We appreciate that Kevin Lindsay and Colin Smith, both District Organisers, have visited Iain as mentioned in the press, and are keeping us informed of Iain's progress.

The General Secretary, or a person nominated, should have given a press statement. After all we do say we are the union for train drivers.

Going to the media would not have been a publicity stunt, but would have reinforced our status as a leading trade union.

Bob Crow, General Secretary of the RMT, has come out of this as a caring General Secretary, and a man who looks after his members' interests. Where were we?

J. G. Bracchi Secretary - Cardiff Branch

[Editor's note: The General Secretary has responded to the Cardiff branch and refers readers to pages 12, 13 and 15 of this edition]

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

To advertise in the ASLEF Journal please contact Sarah Francis on 020 7317 8600 or sfrancis@aslef.org.uk



NEW! ASLEF LGBT Badges are now available for sale. If you wish to purchase one send a cheque made payable to ASLEF for £5.00 (this includes postage and packaging) to the Equalities Adviser at ASLEF Head Office.

CLASS 90 locomotive Tie Slides, Cufflinks & Badges, available in high quality gold & silver plate. Tie Slides £5, Badges £3.50, Cufflinks £9.00. Postage £1.00 per order. Contact Brian Aitkenhead on 07957403679 or at 19 Pine Close, Rendlesham, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP12 2GD.

COLLECTOR requires ASLEF-Coalville NUM 1984/5 strike badge. Will pay £200. Also ASLEF 1982 strike badges, centenary and closure badges. Also NUR badges. Desperate for Bedford 1982 strike badge in chrome or gilt; Portsmouth 1982 strike and Doncaster 1982 gilt strike badge. Contact Barry Jones on 01709 588648 or at 25 Windermere Close, Mexborough, South Yorkshire. S64 0PT.

BOURNEMOUTH LOYALTY BADGE: The Bournemouth branch is offering a limited number of loyalty badges, struck following the 2006 dispute with SWT. For more information on this rare collector's item please contact Driver 'Hans' Kristian Jendesen, Flat 42, Burlington Mansions East, Bournemouth BH5 1AT. First badge donated to head office, others on first come, first served basis. Price £5 including p&p. Cheques made out to Mr. K. Jendesen

TRAIN DRIVER requires all ASLEF badges, strike, depot closure & centenary. Also interested in other British Railway badges, small signs & small railway items. Prices negotiable. Please call 0208-569-7381 or 07930-419850

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LETTERS to the EDITOR

Editor's note: the letter from Bro Sunley in the February Journal provoked a predictably full letter-bag. these are some of the responses

Applause for ASLEF's BNP stance

I WOULD like to thank Keith Norman for his comments regarding the letter from Mr.Sunley.

The BNP and its policies should be abhorrent to all trade unionists and society in general. It saddens me to hear members of our union voicing what they think of as fair and justified opinions regarding race. They minimise race crimes and say the BNP is a just political party.

But while doing this, they also further segregate people who are not white, viewing them as being different and inferior.

Surely any individual who seeks to stir racial hatred, should be dealt with accordingly, no matter what that person's race or faith. I'm afraid BNP leaders fall into the same bracket as the much publicised Islamic extremists.

I'm no politician or religious expert, but I am intelligent enough to realise that those extremists don't represent the Islamic faith any better than the Ku Klux Klan represent the Christians.

The spectre of neo-Nazism in the UK and Europe should be of grave concern to all trade

unionists and humanity as a whole - rather than the xenophobic attitude of the BNP and its supporters who state that articles in the Journal regarding our Brothers in Cuba etc, are a waste of time and money.

Let's continue to stand by those far less well-off than ourselves, who are suffering oppression and a very real lack of free speech, no matter where in the world they are.

I've never been a particularly active member of ASLEF, but I applaud the Union's work on human rights and transport / environmental issues, and I am very happy for my subscription to be used to help fund ASLEF's valuable work in such areas.

Very well done.

Dennis Barnes Plymouth

ASLEF is open to ideas

MR. SUNLEY is wrong when he gives the impression that matters relating to the BNP cannot be discussed for fear of expulsion from ASLEF. Has he learned nothing during his six-year membership of our union? You can go to your branch meetings and discuss anything you like. ASLEF does not dictate what you can and cannot debate. People are free to discuss whatever issues they like. I am sure branches up and down the country (Leeds included) discusses issues that are at times uncomfortable, contentious and heated.

Democracy allows you to do this.

The fact that the General Secretary published Mr. Sunley's letter in the Journal proves this. Has this individual been threatened with expulsion for expressing his opinion? Has he been branded a 'racist and extremist' by the union leadership? No – such a suggestion is rubbish touted by scare-mongers and trouble-makers!

I must say that I am astonished, however, at Mr. Sunley's ignorance when he says that the view of the BNP are not extreme. At one point he says, 'the political policies put forward by the BNP would be beneficial to the country in general'! Let me assure him that no policy from a right wing fascist party would benefit me – or the people I represent – in any way.

I would like to ask Mr. Sunley to show evidence of ASLEF 'wasting time and members' money on fact-finding missions to Cuba'. I have read the financial reports that are put before the union's AAD and I did not see any reference to any such visits. If he has the paperwork to back up this statement he should make it available. If he hasn't then he should apologise and retract the allegation in the Journal.

Finally can I make it clear that Mr. Sunley is not a member of the Leeds branch. I have received a vast amount of angry phone calls and been stopped at work by members incensed at the thought that someone could send such a letter and tarnish the good name of Leeds.

Pauline Cawood Secretary
– Leeds Branch

ASLEF rules, ok?

I WAS concerned to read the points made by Steve Sunley in last month's Journal, promoting the policies of the BNP, a party that openly preaches racism and homophobia.

Like all ASLEF members I am bound by our rulebook, which numbers among its objects, 'To assist in the furtherance of the labour movement generally towards a Socialist society'. It

goes on to say no one will be admitted to the union unless they accept the rules – one of which debars 'members of, supporters of, or sympathisers with, organisations which are diametrically opposed to the objects of the union, such as a fascist organisations.'

Our members wrote our rule-book to ensure all ASLEF members are represented equally regardless of race, gender or sexual orientation – a principle obviously not shared by BNP members. Consequently it is difficult to sympathise with Mr Sunley when he complains of threats of expulsion – which could definitely be justified under rule and arguably on moral grounds as well.

It is naïve to argue that 'the union should restrict itself to matters concerning the rail industry' because trade unionism and the labour movement are by their very nature cross-industry and international movements. Everything working people have achieved over the last 100 years is the result of industrial and political solidarity. The whole labour movement would be undermined if each part of the labour movement acted only in areas of their own immediate area of concern.

It makes no sense to choose to join a Society like ours, with such clearly defined objectives and policies, and then complain when those policies are pursued. It's like joining the scouts and questioning why so much importance is placed on camping trips, tying knots and woggle wearing!

How can anyone claim to be in favour of freedom of expression whilst supporting a political party that would outlaw homosexuality even, according to Alan Goodacre of the BNP policy forum, 'behind closed doors between consenting adults'? If Mr Sunley is genuinely concerned about the hypocrisy of double standards, he should perhaps consider the anomaly of being a member of a trade union and a supporter of a political party that is openly anti-union.

Marz Colombini Waterloo
Nine Elms

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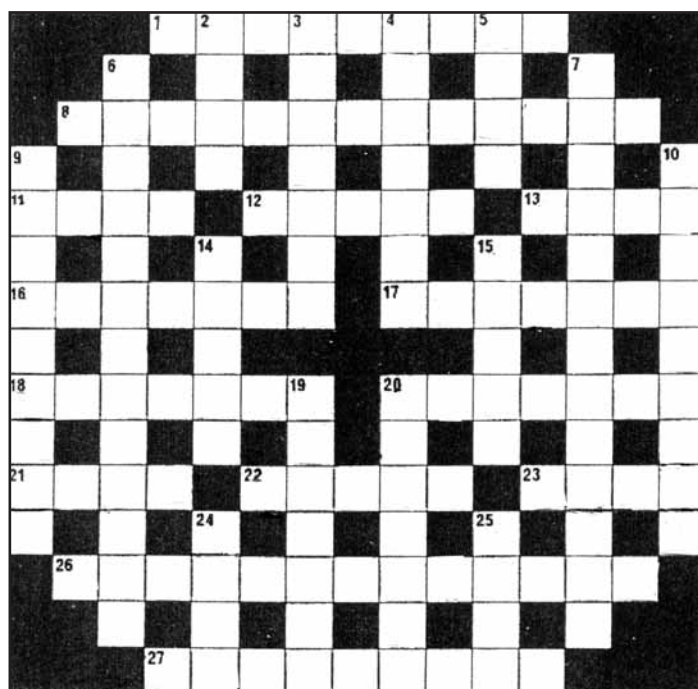
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ASLEF more than just a union

T THOMPSONS
SOLICITORS

Prize Crossword No. 12

set by TLC



Solution to Prize Crossword No 11 which appeared in the March edition of the ASLEF Journal. Congratulations to **Trudi Tate** from **Middlestone Moor, Co. Durham**

ACROSS 1. Mail Train 8 Holiday Makers 11 Meet 12 Issue 13 Anna 16 Tighten 17 Teacher 18 Retired 20 Spinach 21 Alan 22 Uncle 23 Afar 26 Despatch Clerk 27 Old Street **DOWN** 2 Arid 3 Liaison 4 Remount 5 Inks 6 Foreign Travel 7 Trench Warfare 9 Amsterdam 10 Fair Share 14 Start 15 Basil 19 Donates 20 Sulphur 24 Opal 25 Flee

Thanks for all your responses to the eleventh ASLEF crossword in the March edition. If you complete this month's crossword please send the solution to the Editor, ASLEF Journal, 9 Arkwright Road, London NW3 6AB by the end of the month.

CLUES ACROSS

- 1 Underground station featured in Dr Who (5,4)
- 8 Ring William about the cost of the phone (9,4)
- 11 US State (4)
- 12 The light that says 'GO' (5)
- 13 Poker stake (4)
- 16 Formation of troops, aircraft, shifts etc (7)
- 17 Famous male ballet dancer (7)
- 18 Emanate, light up (7)
- 20 Start of a cold (7)
- 21 Heavy metal (4)
- 22 Whiskery growth (5)
- 23 Cold weather garment (4)
- 26 All the way to the terminus (2,3,2,2,4)
- 27 Turned the screw (9)

CLUES DOWN

- 2 Part of a shoe (4)
- 3 Iranian capital (7)
- 4 Place of refreshment at

work (7)

- 5 Type of jug with facial features (4)
- 6 No immediate neighbours here (8,5)
- 7 Status of a Lottery winner! (6,2,5)
- 9 Transport for London (4,5)
- 10 Napkin (9)
- 14 Spotless (5)
- 15 Footballers do it before a match (5)
- 19 Nonsense, bunk (7)
- 20 Pilchard (7)
- 24 Means of transport (4)
- 25 Fairy tale giant (4)



MARKS & SPENCER

The winner of this month's crossword will receive Marks & Spencer vouchers to the value of £25

Name.....

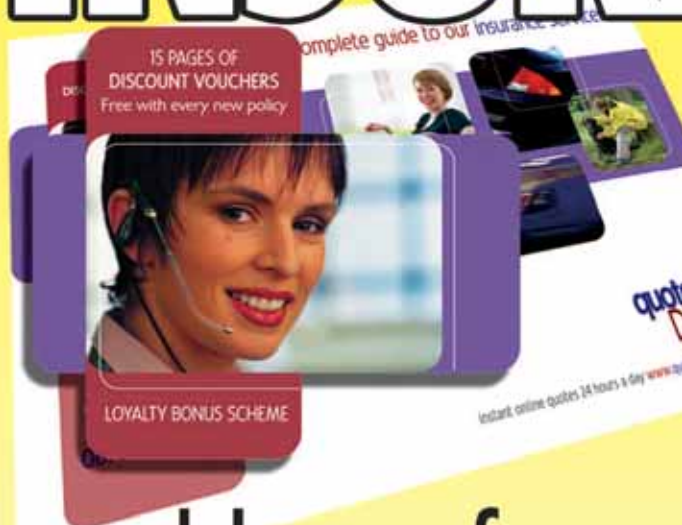
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